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# Constructing "Sameness" and "Difference": Bosnian Diasporic Experiences in a Danish Context

*Construire la « similitude » et la « différence » : les expériences diasporiques bosniennes dans un contexte danois*

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# CONSTRUCTING « SAMENESS » AND « DIFFERENCE » : BOSNIAN DIASPORIC EXPERIENCES IN A DANISH CONTEXT

*Kristina Grünenberg**

## INTRODUCTION[1]

Setting : A municipal allotment in southern Zealand, June 2002[2]

It is fairly cool and windy, but the sun sometimes peeks through the clouds and allows us to feel almost warm on this otherwise cool June day. I am in one of the small municipal allotment gardens with a wooden shed, belonging to Armela and Mirzet, a couple with two children who describe themselves as "Muslims by name" (i.e., non-religious). The neighbouring allotments are occupied mainly by immigrants, mostly Muslims (mainly "Arabs", the family tells me), with whom the family occasionally exchange favours but nothing more. We are about to have a barbecue, pretending that it is a hot summer afternoon. As the chicken starts barbecuing, Mirzet opens a bottle of beer. His wife immediately stands in front of him, shielding him off from the neighbour's potential gazes and starts pouring the beer into opaque plastic cups. « You can drink from a glass if you want,

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[1] Although the perspectives put forth in this paper are entirely my responsibility, I am indebted to my supervisor, Leif Olsen (AKF) for comments and feedback on this paper and to Steven Sampson (University of Lund) for language editing and comments.

[2] Municipal allotments (*kolonihaver*) are small gardens, usually with small cottages for remaining overnight in the summer months. The allotments, many of them picturesque and exhibiting imaginative kitch-peasant architecture, occupy a special place in constructions of Danishness. The first allotment was established in 1884. The idea was to provide a recreational space for workers living in densely populated urban areas and the possibility of a nutritional supplement or an extra source of income from growing vegetable gardens (see http://www.kolonihaveportal.dk). Today, whenever "Danish culture" is on display it often includes images of municipal allotments ; people in their garden drinking beer, eating open-top sandwiches, the Danish flag waving in the background.

Kristina », she says to me. « But if they see us drinking beer, they will start talking, saying that we are not real Muslims. »[3]

The opaque plastic cup with the beer "concealed" inside it can be viewed as a symbolic display of the importance of markers of "sameness vs. difference". The beer, apart from being something the family actually enjoyed, constituted a marker of sameness or equality with Danes. The opaqueness of the plastic cup, however, made it possible to sustain a relation of reciprocity with the Muslim neighbour. In this particular context, it became important for the family to subscribe to a "conventional" Muslim religious order related to the (non-)consumption of alcohol. Construction of relatedness was in this case based upon a common religious affiliation, in contrast to "the Danes" as "the others". Armela's impulse to hide the beer surprised me, because one of the things frequently mentioned to me by the Bosnian Muslim informants with whom I conducted fieldwork was the difference between them and other Muslims. The markers of difference varied : sometimes they would mention that most Bosnian Muslim (men) drank alcohol ; on other occasions, they would note the more egalitarian relations between men and women in Bosnian as opposed to in Arab families where women wore the veil[4].

The example of the hidden beer provides an illustration of the contextual nature of identification. The point here is *not* whether the differences cited between Bosnian Muslims (Bosniaks[5]) and other Muslims were factual. Rather, the focus is on the importance that these markers of sameness and difference acquired, and the frequency with which they were invoked among this group of refugees to Denmark, all of who have been in the country for about a

[3] Fieldnotes, June 2002.

[4] Occasionally, I would hear categorizations very much akin to those operating in Bosnia in terms of "culturedness" (*kultura*) and "non-culturedness" (*nekultura*) applied to other immigrants and refugee groups. In former Yugoslavia, the terms "peasant" (*seljak*) or "bumpkin" (*papak*) were used about people from small villages defined as narrow-minded, uncultured and backward, or as a specific provincial outlook on life implying the same adjectives. The concepts then constituted important social categories marking socio-cultural differences in the Bosnian, but also in the Danish context (see **Bringa (Tone),** *Being Muslim the Bosnian Way : Identity and Community in a Central Bosnian Village*, Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1995 ; **Grünenberg (Kristina),** *Det tomme rum ? Midlertidighed, flygtningelandsbyer og bosniske flygtninge i Danmark* (The Empty Room. Temporariness, Refugee Villages and Bosnian Refugees in Denmark), University of Copenhagen (Institute for Anthropology) : MA Thesis, 1997 ; **Grünenberg (Kristina),** « Det her milevidt fra Grundtvig. Kontinuitet, forandring og fællesskab i to danske flygtningelandsbyer » (This is Miles Away from Grundtvig. Continuity, Change and Community in Two Bosnian Refugee Villages), in Schwartz (Jonathan), ed., *Et Midlertidigt liv. Bosniske flygtninge i de nordiske lande* (A Temporary Life : Bosnian Refugees in the Nordic Countries), Copenhagen : Nord, 1998.

[5] "Bosniak" (*Bošnjak*) is a historical term whose meaning has, according to anthropologist Tone Bringa, been heavily debated especially in the immediate pre-war situation (see **Bringa (Tone),** *op.cit.*, pp. 34-36). Among the families of my study, the generally accepted meaning of the term was to equate it with Bosnian Muslims, so as to distinguish them from Bosnian Croats (Catholics) and Bosnian Serbs (Orthodox). The majority of the refugees from Bosnia who arrived in Denmark between 1992 and 1995 were Muslims, however. Among the families in my own research, the self-referential category generally used was "Bosnian" rather than "Bosniak", which is therefore the term I use in this paper.

decade. In this article, I will tell one of several possible and equally valid multilayered stories. Thus, while this introductory example would seem to hint at an attempt to establish common grounds with other Muslim immigrants, my focus here will describe how Bosnian Muslims avoided, rather than cultivated such relations.

The main actors in this article are Bosnian adults, all of whom were parents, who at the time of my fieldwork were mainly oriented towards the creation of a "normal life", after being granted permanent resident status in the mid-1990s. Their practice is inextricably linked to a longing to "fit" into Danish society. At the same time they consistently expressed a feeling of being under a constant vigilant Danish gaze and a certain pressure to conform to what, I will later argue, constitute Danish ideals of sameness.

First I will describe how Bosnian refugees were initially constructed in a specific way in the Danish media and political debate as a consequence of what was defined as their Europeaness and a Danish ideal and discourse of sameness. Then I will discuss how this specific way of constructing Bosnians, together with a more tense political climate following the September 11th terrorist attacks in New York and the harsh Danish debate on immigrants and refugees (and in particular on Muslims) which dominated the Danish general elections of 20 November 2001 resulted, on the one hand, in limited social interaction with people from the Danish majority population[6], and, on the other hand, in a practice and discourse of avoidance of other Muslim immigrants and refugees. Finally I will speculate how the mentioned situation might, together with other factors, have initially contributed to an emphasis on secularity even for those Bosnians who were practicing Muslims[7].

[6] As one example of the campaign, the major winner of the elections, the Liberal Party *Venstre* introduced an election poster during their campaign, featuring a small group of immigrant males who had been convicted of raping a young ethnic Danish girl, coming out of the Court of Law. The poster was imprinted with the words *Time for Change*. Thereby the individual characteristics of these minorised individuals were generalized to all ethnically minorised males. See also **Andreassen (Rikke)**, *Gender, Race, Sexuality and Nationality. An Analysis of the Danish News Media's Communication about Visible Minorities from 1971 to 2004*, University of Toronto (Department of History) : PhD dissertation, 2005, p. 203, for an analysis of the meanings attached to this poster.

[7] It is important to underline that I am not arguing that Bosnian actively hid the fact that they were religious, but rather that *if* they were, this was not generally articulated among the households which I did my research at the time. Today however, it seems to have become increasingly difficult to be a "secular", meaning non-practicing/religious Muslim in the Danish public debate.

## DANISH DISCOURSES OF SAMENESS AND BOSNIANS AS « LEGITIMATE OTHERS »

One of the consequences of this practice and discourse of avoidance is a widespread view of Bosnians as "racists" who think too highly of themselves. It is a view I encountered not only among other immigrants, but also among Danish social workers and even one researcher on migration issues[8]. I will argue, however, that rather than "racism" being an inherent and reified trait of Bosnianness, we are dealing with social processes related to a Danish discourse about levels of relatedness and inclusion based upon a perception of sameness or similarity. The premise of this discourse could be expressed as « the more you are defined as "being like us", the more you are able to be part of the "us" in question ». As John Larsen puts it : « [It is] a dominant notion [in Danish society] that the condition for societal participation of foreigners is premised on their similarity with us »[9].

Several other scholars have addressed this specific way of dealing with sameness and difference in a Danish context[10]. In his book *Strangers, Ambivalence and Social Theory*, a deconstructivist approach to the discourse on immigration, Bülent Diken, for example, argues that in Denmark, a monoculturalist, assimilationist discourse has become prevalent :

> In Denmark, where a « core set of cultural and political values » are generally defined on the basis of nationality and increasingly of Europeanness, a monoculturalist, assimilationist discourse still prevails. Traditionally, the politics and discourse of assimilation prioritized a homogeneous vision of Danish society, and

[8] This idea is based on interviews with a municipal social worker, a member of the regional integration council, a housing consultant and personal communication with researchers working within the field of migration.

[9] **Larsen (John),** *Bosniske krigsflygtninge i dansk offentlighed. Forestillinger og politisk virkelighed* (Bosnian war refugees in the Danish public space : imagination and political reality), København : Institut for Antropologi, 1997.

[10] **Borish (Steven),** *The Land of the Living : The Danish Folk High Schools and Denmark's Non-Violent Path to Modernization*, Nevada City : Blue Dolphin Press, 1991 ; **Goldschmidt Salomon (Karen Lisa),** « "I grunden er vi enige." En eskkursion i skandinavisk foreningsliv » ("We Actually Agree." An Excursion in the Life of Scandinavian Associations), *Journal of Anthropology*, 25, 1992 ; **Liep (John), Olwig (Karen F.),** eds., *Komplekse Liv. Kulturel mangfoldighed i Danmark* (Complex Lives. Cultural Diversity in Denmark), Copenhagen : Akademisk Forlag, 1994 ; **Anderson (Sally),** *Chronic Proximity and the Management of Difference. Study of the Danish School Practice of « Klasse »*, University of Copenhagen (Department of Anthropology) : MA Thesis, 1996 ; **Grünenberg (Kristina),** *op.cit.* The historian Uffe Østergaard argues that this particular way of conceiving the Danish national and cultural community which is based on an emphasis on sameness and homogeneity is rooted in a broad popular cultural movement promoting the rights of the common man / peasantry and in the ethos of social equality rooted in the historical movement of *Grundtvigianism*. Nikolay Frederik Severin Grundtvig (1783-1872) was a Danish priest, writer and politician whose ideas, broad popular appeal and emphasis on equality and sameness have had a profound influence on the Danish political discourse and welfare model (see **Liep (John) and Olwig (Karen F.),** « Kulturel kompleksitet » (Cultural Complexity), in Liep (John), Olwig (Karen F.), eds., *op.cit.*).

> making minority groups invisible without creating ethnic enclaves or ghettos has been the main target. The individual immigrant's role in such a vision has been to adapt oneself to the homogeneous values of this monocultural/thus homogeneous, society.[11]

While Diken calls this discourse "prevalent", it is not the only one. He points to the existence of a complementary discourse of multiculturalism, which focuses on the "preservation" and rights of *cultures* as homogenous entities in their own right as another important part of the Danish discursive environment. I would add that another component of this scenario, related mainly to the monoculturalist discourse, was a general media tendency of lumping all "non-Danes" into the category of "foreigners" regardless of individual, sociocultural, political, religious and historical differences and objectify them as a cultural, social and economic burden[12]. After September 11th, however, this tendency seems to have evolved into a particularly negative focus on Muslims who were defined as unable, or unwilling to adapt to Danish social norms and values, associated with honour killings and forced marriages, and furthermore portrayed as potential fundamentalists and terrorists[13]. In this paper, the main focus is on perceptions and articulations related to this media scenario and to what Diken calls the "monoculturalist discourse". I will address this complex scenario following a brief description of Bosnian immigration to Denmark.

## BOSNIAN IMMIGRATION TO DENMARK

In 2003, about 20 618 people of Bosnian origin were residing in Denmark, of which 2 566 had been born in Denmark[14]. Of these, the vast majority were Muslim refugees who had arrived in the wake of the war in Bosnia. In the mid-1990s, when the Bosnian Muslim refugees arrived in Denmark, it was gene-

[11] **Diken (Bülent)**, *Strangers, Ambivalence and Social Theory*, Aldershot : Ashgate, 1998, p. 54.

[12] **Gaarde Madsen (Jacob)**, *Mediernes construction af flygtninge- og indvandrer spørgsmålet* (The Media Construction of the Question of Refugees and Immigrants), Magtudredningen : Hans Reizels Forlag, 2000.

[13] See **Andreassen (Rikke)**, *op.cit.*, p. 157. According to two research reports, it was already the case before September 11th. See **Hervik (Peter)**, *Mediernes Muslimer. En antropologisk undersøgelse af mediernes dækning af religioner i Danmark* (The Muslims of the Media. An Anthropological Investigation in the Media Coverage of Religions in Denmark), Copenhagen : Nævnet for Etnisk ligestilling, 1997 ; **Dindler (Svend), Olesen (Asta)**, eds., *Islam og Muslimer i de danske medier* (Islam and Muslims in the Danish Media), Aarhus : Aarhus Universitetsforlag, 1988.

[14] 17 793 of these people were Bosnian citizens with a permanent resident permit, and 3 301 of them had by 2003 acquired Danish citizenship. See **Statistics Denmark**, *Statistical Yearbook 2003*, available at <http://www.dst.dk/Yearbook.aspx>.

rally their "relaxed" attitude to religion and the fact that they were European which was highlighted repeatedly in the dominant media and political discourses[15]. Two factors are important here in trying to explain the specific construction of Bosnians in media as well as political discussions. First, as daily reports from war-torn Bosnia and Hercegovina filled the media, there emerged a new concept of "Bosnian war refugees" (*Bosniske krigsflygtninge*). In a context of debates about "fake asylum seekers" and "refugees of convenience" (*bekvemmelighedsflygtninge*), there seemed to be a high proportion of legitimacy attached to this concept of "war refugees"[16]. Secondly, "the Bosnians" were publicly identified as "secular", "European" Muslims, and as a group with a relatively high level of education. This in turn led to the prevalence of a definition of the Bosnian group as being very much like a Danish « us »[17], understood as the most easily integrated, most adaptable, least visible and thus easiest to deal with. The discussion of Bosnians was in sharp contrast to media debates about Somali refugees, often referred to by social workers as the "heavy group", "the others" *par excellence*. Somalis wee contrasted with the Bosnians, who were depicted as "the good example" or "authentic refugees".

Diken illustrates this point with a comment by female volunteer from the *Friends of Refugees* association. Talking to a Danish journalist about the Bosnian refugees, she remarks : « Many Danes compare them to Muslim extended families from Turkey or Arab countries, but they are really *just ordinary people* » (emphasis added). This remark became the headline of the article : « Bosnians are Just Like Us »[18]. As Diken argues, defining the Bosnians as « just like us » and other immigrants as « not ordinary people », and thus « not like us » establishes a definitive dichotomy between Danes and non-Danes. It thus becomes necessary to get rid of the "non-" in order to become Danish. A virtual "either/or" is in place[19]. The positioning of the Bosnian Muslim households in this dichotomy, although being in some ways advantageous to them

[15] It was often claimed that the Bosnians were Muslim in the same way that most Danes are nominally Protestant, meaning not really Muslims and therefore able to be Europeans. See also **Bringa (Tone)**, *op.cit.*, p. 7.

[16] John Larsen has aptly demonstrated this point in his study of media discourses about Bosnian refugees. See **Larsen (John)**, *op.cit.*

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 134.

[18] **Diken (Bülent)**, *op.cit.* p. 97. I collected many similar comments during my first fieldwork in the refugee camps in 1995 both from Red Cross staff and from Danish "contact families". See **Grünenberg (Kristina)**, *Bosnianness, Culture and Context*, University of Oxford (Refugee Studies Programme ) : Trinity term paper, 1995.

[19] Tone Bringa shows how the same kind of binary oppositions are often invoked when scholars try to make sense of the phenomenon "European Muslims", which challenged the notion of Europe as inherently Christian. She argues that as long as the dominant European discourse defines Europe as Christian, then Bosnian Muslims will have to be defined either as « not European, or as European, but not really Muslim ». See **Bringa (Tone)**, *op.cit.*, p. 7.

in comparison with other immigrant groups, had an unfortunate side effect : Bosnians often felt to be under a constant scrutinizing Danish gaze.

## SAMENESS, DANISH GAZES AND BOSNIAN SELF-SURVEILLANCE

> Before, when I walked in the streets with [my four-year old daughter] Dženita, we would sometimes speak Danish, sometimes Bosnian, whatever the child felt like. I didn't have a problem speaking Bosnian to her on the street. Now I have started forcing her to speak Danish if someone is looking, or if there are many Danes around, just to justify myself in the situation. (...) I am beginning to feel ashamed of speaking my own language.[20]

In this quote, Nizama specifically refers to the situation before and after the media discussion and political campaign during the aforementioned general elections. This discussion and the political campaign revolved around the difficulties of integrating foreigners into Danish society, where the main political parties had various combinations of "carrot and stick" policies including restrictions on immigration, expulsion of immigrants who commit serious crimes, compulsory language examinations and more control on welfare payments. Her account shows what several of the families perceived as a change of situation, which seemed to enlarge the scope and centrality of the monoculturalist discourse and thus enhance the pressure to conform to the principle of sameness. The terrorist attacks in New York in September 2001 further seemed to have enhanced Bosnians' feelings of being under "the gaze of the other".

Diken argues that it is not necessarily in immigrants' interest to be categorized along the axis of sameness. Following Edward Said[21], Diken argues that the binary oppositions at work predefine subject roles prior to any social interaction and thus either delimit or prevent meaningful social contact. On the other hand, paraphrasing Jacques Derrida, Diken considers that the fact that the "non-" has to be removed from the "non-Dane" in order to achieve sameness leads to a forced appropriation of "the other" into "the same", i.e., what we otherwise term "assimilation". I would argue that both lines of argument could be applied to the situation of the Bosnian families.

Diken focuses principally on discourse. While I would concur that this use of binaries seems to be an important constituent of the monoculturalist *dis-*

[20] Interview, November 2001.

[21] **Said (Edward)**, *Orientalism*, London : Vintage, 1979.

*course* on immigrants, it is not only a question of "either/or". In practice, Bosnian families as well as other refugee groups were placed and placed themselves on a continuum from "difference" to "sameness" in relation to the Danish majority population. Their place on this continuum depended on the specific context and the position of the individual. Along this continuum, as Larsen argues, Bosnian refugees were originally defined in the public discourse as a category somewhere between other foreigners and Danes. On the surface, they were, after all, "European refugees", light skinned, wearing European clothing. Moreover, their claim to political persecution could hardly be disputed in light of the war events in Bosnia.

This categorization of *the* Bosnians as « like us » was a privileged and positive position, which may have contributed in making it relatively easier for Bosnian families to gain access to the labour market[22]. As Diken states, following Michel Foucault : « Any discursive utterance is not merely a linguistic but also a social practice »[23]. However, this positive image had a reverse side. Bosnians who tried to conform to this image of similarity found that in socializing with Danish acquaintances and colleagues and interacting in the public sphere caused a feeling of being under the constant scrutinizing "gaze of the other". It is a gaze reminiscent of the "Foucauldian" one : « Just a gaze. An inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual under its weight will end by interiorizing to the point that he [she] is his [her] own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against him[her]self. A superb formula : power exercised continuously and for what turns out to be a minimal cost »[24].

Moreover, I would argue that this initial positive image of similarity, combined with the harsh debate on immigrants as an undifferentiated mass, led some Bosnians, especially adults, to either avoid contact with or dissociate themselves from other immigrants. After September 11$^{th}$, this pattern of avoidance was especially prevalent in relation to other Muslim immigrants, both those who originally came to Denmark as labour migrants (e.g., Turks, Pakistanis, etc.) and those who had come as refugees (e.g. Palestinians, other Arab groups, Somalis, etc.).

[22] Coupled with the fact that the general educational level was relatively high, compared to other refugee and immigrant groups. See **Gluhovic (Petar)**, *Integration af bosniske flygtninge på arbejdsmarkedet* (Integration of Bosnian Refugees on the Labour Market), Copenhagen : CASA, 2000, p. 12.

[23] **Diken (Bülent)**, *op.cit.*, p. 37.

[24] Michel Foucault (1980), quoted in **Denzin (Norman K.)**, *The Cinematic Society : The Voyeur's Gaze*, London : Sage Publications, 1995, p. 1. I would argue however, that the scrutinizing voyeur's gaze was not simply interiorized. By being aware of the gaze and relating consciously to it, some families already seemed to be challenging it, a point I will have to elaborate in a different article. See also **Holstein (James A.), Gubrium (Jaber F.)**, *The Self We Live By : Narrative Identity in a Post-Modern World*, Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2000.

The following examples from my fieldwork serve to illustrate my first point about the experience of uncomfortable differences between Danes and Bosnians in public space and in social interaction.

I am out for a walk in the city centre with Snježana, a 36-year-old designer. We speak Bosnian together (or Serbo-Croatian as she prefers to call it) and because of her way of continuously looking around us, I sense a kind of unease. When I ask her what is the matter, she replies : « You speak very loudly. You automatically raise your voice when you are speaking Serbo-Croatian ». Later on, as we discuss the incident, she says : « Well, everything in Denmark is so quiet... People look at you if you speak loudly, you stick out. In the beginning, when I was speaking on the phone with my girlfriends, Ole [her Danish boyfriend] would ask if something was wrong with the line, because he thought we were shouting, but that's just the way we talk »[25]. Snježana added that she felt very embarrassed when, from time to time, she would hear other Bosnians speaking loudly in public spaces[26].

Another example will serve as an illustration of how differences felt uncomfortably highlighted in social interaction. In an interview with Namira (a 38-year-old nursery school teacher), she brings up the topic of the lack of social interaction with Danes outside working hours. She tells the story about a Christmas party she went to with her Danish colleagues at work : « It was a lot of fun in the beginning. We went bowling. It was a lot of fun. But during dinner they started discussing music... some singer from the eighties. I didn't know the singer, so I started feeling left out ». Her husband Denis adds : « That was a marvellous example, Namira, I have experienced this in my parties at work as well, you sit there and you think: who on earth is this now ? You get bored and think : I ought to say something now, but I can't. Then what do you do with yourself ? »[27].

Namira also explained the difficulty she had answering her colleagues' question about why she didn't eat pork. She said : « The question bothered me and I didn't know how to explain it. We just never ate it at home ». She was bothered by the fact that she felt the need to justify not eating pork. This discomfort should be seen in the context of a dominant discourse according to which differences need to be defended and explained whereas similarities do not[28].

[25] Fieldnotes, September 2003.

[26] Which means that not all Bosnians would feel the need to conform to public "norms of silence". They would then be categorized as "non-cultured" (*nekulturni*) or "peasants" (*seljaci*) by the people striving to conform to these norms.

[27] Interview, June 2003.

[28] However, in this context some differences are more acceptable than others. Had Namira e.g. been a vegetarian, she would probably not have had to answer the same kind of probing questions.

Social interaction with Danes thus highlighted concrete differences and the lack of a certain shared "experiential" repertoire, which questioned the definition of sameness and relatedness upon which the "positive connotations" of Bosnian refugees as being « like us » was constructed. I would argue, however, that rather than these differences being necessarily "cultural", that is related to the fact that Namira and Denis were Bosnians, they might just as well have derived from social, generational and/or other factors transcending the conventional understanding of culture as rooted in geographical place of origin. As an example of these non-cultural factors, we can cite the fact that several of the families had had to take up employment within occupational sectors which they had never previously considered. In some cases, this was because the Danish system did not recognize educational qualifications from Bosnia, thus impeding people from being able to practice their occupation or occupy the same qualified position as they had in former Yugoslavia (e.g., engineer, doctor, etc.). In other cases, there were linguistic barriers. In general, pre- and post-war social positions and occupations varied considerably. As a consequence, Danish colleagues were often from a very different social background. Or to put it more concretely, middle-class, cultured Bosnians encountered traditional working-class Danes. What appeared to be clash of national cultures was just as much a clash of classes, life-styles and educational backgrounds.

Nonetheless, cultural explanations – very much at work in the Danish discursive environment – were also invoked by the families themselves in certain contexts, as for example when explaining different ways of life between the Danish and Bosnian population or different religious attitudes between Bosnian Muslims and other Muslims. Differences *among* Bosnians and similarities with Danes were highlighted and made more relevant in other contexts, such as e.g. when explaining to me why in some families there was a feeling of social isolation despite the presence of Bosnian neighbours, or why some people would not attend Bosnian clubs. Articulation of intra-group differences, however, seemed to have become much less pronounced over time, which provided a sharp contrast to the way in which differences were articulated by the Bosnians in the Danish refugee camps during the mid-1990s[29].

[29] See **Grünenberg (Kristina),** « "Bosnianness" in the Context of a Specific Refugee Policy », *Anthropology in Action*, 3(1), 1996 ; **Grünenberg (Kristina)**, *Det tomme rum ?* (op.cit.). I do not mean to imply that the internal differences had vanished, but that it seemed less important to emphasize them in the present context. In everyday camp life, these differences were continuously emphasized, the families would share a very small space, being unable to avoid one another, and would be generally treated as a homogenous group by Red Cross staff members who were mostly unfamiliar with life in former Yugoslavia and thus unfamiliar with identity markers, including those marking social class. Furthermore, the whole idea of establishing "refugee villages" (*flygtningelandsbyer*), with the implicit references to a community atmosphere, reinforced this perception of the Bosnians as a single, unified group. Later on, outside the

Regardless of the specific differences which were constructed as significant and thus led to the uncomfortable sensation of "not fitting in", the importance that cultural explanations seemed to hold and the frequency with which they were invoked in different contexts I found thought-provoking[30]. Given this context, to imply that all Bosnians formed part of a community as such or asserting that there is a single Bosnian Muslim (Bosniak) community would be incorrect. Instead it is possible to identify several communities or friendship and family groups, some of which would be overlapping, and some of which would have nothing to do with one another as a consequence of, for example, different socio-cultural backgrounds or because of differing views about religion, politics, and other issues[31].

Enhanced by the feeling of being under the gaze of "the Other" in public space, being inside the "home"[32], that is in private space, with family and Bosnian friends and neighbours, seemed to constitute a "sanctuary" for most Bosnians. Home was a place where religious, linguistic, culinary and other "differentiating" aspects could be enacted without a direct "othering" and questioning gaze. However, for some of the young people and especially some of the girls and a few adult women, "home" took on a completely different meaning. Depending on the articulation of gender roles in the family, "home" could also turn into the place where they were under the gaze of vigilant parents or spouses.

To sum up my first point, then, the fact that the Bosnian families were predefined as "the same", in the public debate paradoxically delimited and complicated social interaction with Danes. Actual social relationships between Bosnians and Danes hinged upon the limits of the perceived notion of sameness and highlighted differences. These differences, whether grounded in personal, gender, age or socially related experiences or a combination of them all, would generally be interpreted by both parties as differences in culture. This interpretation accords with Said's argument that the predefinition of subject roles limits or prevents proximity. In this case, however, the limitation is based

*camp context, the families were no longer "forced" to relate to other Bosnians with whom they found* little if anything in common, but could establish social relations on the basis of common interests, sense of relatedness, etc.

[30] For a brief discussion of "over-culturalization" in Danish society, see **Sampson (Steven)**, « Why Do Bosnian Kids Piss on the Floor ? Clearing Up Cultural Misunderstandings in a Culturalised Society », *Anthropology in Action*, 3(1), 1996.

[31] For similar arguments, see also **Wight (Ellen),** *Bosnians in Chicago : Transnational Activities and Obstacles to Transnationalism*, Brighton : Sussex Centre for Migration Research, 2000 ; **Al-Ali (Nadje)**, « Gender Relations, Transnational Ties and Rituals among Bosnian Refugees », *Global Networks. A Journal of Transnational Affairs*, 2(3), July 2002.

[32] On different meanings of "home" in the context of migration, see **Ahmed (Sara), Castañeda (Claudia), Fortier (Anne-Marie), Scheller (Mimi)**, eds., *Uprootings/Regroundings. Questions of Home and Migration*, Oxford : Berg, 2003.

not in any racist or Orientalist stereotype, but in a positive categorization of like-mindedness. Being defined as « just like us » is not necessarily a guarantee of social proximity or inclusion. Perceptions of sameness did not lead to closeness, but instead to distance.

## OTHERING THE OTHERS : HIERARCHY OF FOREIGNERS AND BOSNIAN « ARROGANCE »

Turning to my second point, I will start with an illustration related to the discussion of the above-mentioned, more or less self-imposed pressure to conform to Danish norms. During an informal conversation, I was surprised by a comment by Hajro (a 43-year-old sports teacher) : « In a way I envy the Somalis, they seem more free, more relaxed, they are not afraid of shouting across the street or looking differently »[33]. From Hajro's perspective, the one of someone feeling pressure to conform to a Danish ideal of sameness, the Somalis seemed freer, more at ease and in a certain way protected by the impossibility of conforming to the ideal of sameness.

Commenting on the Danish situation, Liep and Olwig observe that « it would seem that general cultural perceptions of a people united in equality and like-mindedness have in practice caused a differentiation into smaller groups within which this idea of unity/harmony and equality can be upheld »[34]. Following the argument that social relationships, relatedness and communities in Denmark are constructed on the basis of perceptions of sameness and according to the logics of the monoculturalist discourse, the Somalis, were excluded from a "Danish us" by virtue of their different physical appearance ; they were not expected by majority Danes, the media or politicians to be "the same", but instead expected to form a community of their own[35]. They were to a greater extent "expected" to be different, whereas the Bosnians were expected to be (almost) similar[36].

While recognizing the real problems related to the marginal and stigma-

[33] Fieldnotes, June 2003.

[34] **Liep (John), Olwig (Karen F.)**, art.cit., p. 17 (my translation from the Danish).

[35] **Knudsen (Anne)**, *Her går det godt, Send flere penge* (All is Well Here, Send More Money), Copenhagen : Gyldendals Forlag, 1996, p. 27.

[36] However, this does not mean that Somalis are not under pressure to conform to public norms. It means that it is no big surprise to anyone if they do not.

tized position occupied by Somali refugees, and the fact that many Somali would most probably not recognize themselves in Hajro's statement, I would argue that the two groups, while both being Muslims, had to deal with quite different problems due to their different subject positions and the spaces of identification available to them. In the case of the Bosnian families, they could only reaffirm their relatively high position on the Danish "hierarchy of foreigners" by distancing themselves from other foreigners, especially from other Muslims. In effect, this distancing took the form of accentuating a specific secular version of Bosnian Muslim identity[37].

This process of distancing was visible in the neighbourhood in which I conducted part of my fieldwork, where both Bosnian and Somali families were living. There was no interaction between the Bosnian and the Somali families, and my Bosnian informants often pointed out to me how different the Somalis were[38]. As Bato (a 38-year-old man working as a translator) commented in an irritated tone of voice when talking about the neighbourhood : « Some new Danish people moved in upstairs, and I was helping them a bit. I told them that the only problem in this neighbourhood is that there are too many foreigners. It gives the place a bad reputation among the Danes even though there aren't any problems ». A few minutes later, Bato adds : « But the Somalis take drugs and steal »[39].

This distancing rhetoric would not only be expressed in relation to the Somalis, however. Distance would also often be articulated in relation to other, mainly Muslim refugee and immigrant groups. As Mirzeta (34 years old) puts it : « Bosnians are different [from other refugees], they are not very different from Danes. Really [*boga mi*], there isn't a lot of difference. Let's say you compare Bosnian and Arab Muslims... They are not the same, they really aren't »[40].

General identification with or definitions of relatedness with other immigrants and/or refugees, which forms an explicit goal or sometimes an implicit outcome of the work of immigrant associations, was not expressed by the Bosnian informants. A notable exception were those in younger generation, who succeeded in establishing occasional friendships with other youngsters defined as "non-Danes"[41]. The following excerpt from my fieldnotes shows

[37] One might argue that all Muslims who participate in the public debate and the democratic institutions in Denmark are secularized to a certain extent, notwithstanding their religious observance. By using the word "secular" in this context, I mean non-religious or non-practicing.

[38] By this I do not mean to imply the existence of some norm that prescribes social interaction between groups of immigrants. It is, after all, quite common for Danes not to have extended contact with their neighbours as well.

[39] Fieldnotes, June 2003.

[40] Interview, June 2003.

[41] At least one of the young boys, being the fairest and most blond of all the Bosnian youngsters, who

how two models of identification, one based on a "common immigrant identification", the other based on non-identification with immigrants, were juxtaposed in an incident between 17-year-old Bosnian Saida, and her Palestinian high school friend Leyla :

> I am off downtown with Saida and one of her friends, Leyla, whom we meet at school and whom Saida has presented as Palestinian. We are off window shopping. In the pedestrian area, Saida points to a huge man and a small skinny woman : « He is a driving teacher, and that is his girlfriend », she whispers with a giggle, referring to the size difference. As we are heading home on our bicycles, she mentions another story she had heard in school a few days earlier :
>
> « They mentioned that in Copenhagen four *perkere* [derogatory term for Pakistanis, now extended to everyone with an ethnic background considered foreign] were taking driving lessons and they completely wrecked the car, imagine that ! »
>
> Leyla replies, astonished : « What fame you are giving us ! » [By the "us", Leyla was including Saida in the *perker* category].
>
> Saida, puzzled : « Ehh ? »
>
> Me : « What do you mean by *perkere* ? »
>
> Saida, blushing and stuttering : « Ehh, I don't really know... ehh... I guess people who aren't Danish ».
>
> We went off the topic as we approached a small hill which made it difficult to talk, and the subject wasn't mentioned again.[42]

Saida hadn't conceived of herself as a *perker*, as opposed to Leyla who immediately stepped into the position, making it part of her identificational repertoire. What was meant to be a funny story turned out to be an embarrassment from Leyla's point of view, displaying Saida's lack of « knowing her place » with other foreigners within the cultural hierarchy in place in the Danish context.

Social interaction in the parent generation outside the realm of the household or extended family would take place mainly with other Bosnians, if at all. During an interview, a housing consultant working in a housing estate containing several Bosnian, Somali and Palestinian families discussed the Bosnian group of residents and their lack of cooperation and contact with the other immigrant groups : « The Bosnians keep to themselves. They do not mix with "the blacks". They are actually a bit racist »[43]. The same housing consultant added that the other groups of immigrant residents defined the Bosnians as "racists" as well.

spoke flawless Danish could easily be defined as Danish, increasingly identified with other immigrant youth as opposed to Danish youngsters, much to the dismay of his parents.

[42] Fieldnotes, June 2002.

[43] Interview, May 2002.

The Bosnians' avoidance of other groups and the attitude displayed by the housing consultant can both be viewed as an outcome of the Danish discourse of sameness, although from different perspectives. The housing consultant expected the Bosnian families to show solidarity with other immigrant and refugee groups. Like the Palestinians and Somalis, the Bosnians came to Denmark as refugees. Instead, the Bosnian families in question would on several occasions associate themselves more with the Danish majority population ; for example by dissociating themselves from other immigrants and refugees or by explicitly focusing on "sameness" with Danes.

Hajro, a 38-year-old bricklayer, explained how he managed to inscribe himself into this sameness prerogative in an interview in which he repeatedly mentioned how he drinks beer and identifies himself as "not a real Muslim" at work. Hajro talks about his first day at work : « It isn't so difficult now as it was in the beginning. It was interesting, but at closing time, everyone grabbed a beer or two and then everyone looked at me. Then *I* grabbed a beer. They all laughed, and I made fun of myself [by saying] "Now you know, I am really only a 'photocopied Muslim'" »[44].

By making fun of himself, emphasizing a specifically secular version of Muslim identity, Hajro inscribed himself successfully into the Danish (monoculturalist) discourse and ideal of sameness and difference. This ideal, centered on sameness, contributed to a process by which Bosnian families tended to continually emphasize a specifically secular version of Bosnian Muslim identity, in some cases toning down religious and other potentially differentiating aspects in the process, and to dissociate themselves from other immigrants, and especially from other Muslims. However, the fact that a secular Muslim identity was continuously emphasized did not mean that religious practices, or practices which were conceived of as referring to Islam, were completely absent in all families. On the contrary, I argue in the next section that the privacy with which religious practices were enacted and the fact that I have very little empirical material concerning religious life might be in part related to the same discursive emphasis on sameness, which I have pointed to throughout this paper[45].

44 Interview, June 2002.

45 Knowing that as a representative of the majority population and a researcher as well, the knowledge I produced would be widely accessible, and given the monoculturalist discursive emphasis on sameness, the political climate around the time of my fieldwork and the fact that I did not specifically raise the issue of religion, it could be expected that the families did not bring up their religious practices and beliefs during my fieldwork.

## RELIGIOUS PRACTICES IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Religious practices varied considerably from family to family[46]. On the basis of comparative research with Bosnian refugees in the Netherland and the United Kingdom, Nadje Al-Ali has argued that for many Bosnian refugees in the UK, Islam « has remained largely a framework for ethnic and cultural identity rather than a marker of religious belonging »[47]. Al-Ali also found that Bosnians often emphasized their specific approach to Islam, as opposed to the way Islam was approached by other refugees and immigrants, and that they would stress their European heritage : « We are European as much as we are Muslim », was a remark frequently heard by Al-Ali during her fieldwork[48]. At the same time, Al-Ali wondered about the specific stress on "Muslimness" which took place in the context of her conversations : « I could not help but wonder if and how much my Muslim name prompted several of my respondents to stress their "Muslimness" and thereby our supposed commonalities »[49]. In my own empirical material, informants instead stressed their commonality with Danes, and there was a general absence of direct references to "Muslimnes", religion and to religious practices as such, except when related to the older generation, burial rituals and celebrations such as *Bajram*, which was often compared to the tradition of Christmas in Denmark (i.e., more a celebration of family life than a religious ritual as such)[50].

The most interesting issue here, however, is not whether or not the families were actually religious or not, but rather how they would present and identify themselves in various contexts. Sometimes the only way I would know about practices related to religion was through second-hand information, by people who would sometimes classify these practices as a sign of "non-culturedness" (*nekultura*), pertaining to a way of life reminiscent of Bosnian villages

[46] According to the religious historian Tim Jensen, there are no official statistics regarding the number of practicing Muslims in Denmark. Based solely on the number of immigrants from Muslim countries (which then includes a variety of different ways of relating to religion, including atheists), Islam is judged to be the second largest religion in Denmark (following the Danish Lutheran State church) with estimates varying between 149 000 and 170 000 Muslims (approximately 3 % of the population). There were approximately 55 mosques in Denmark in 1999, but only one, pertaining to the *Ahmadiyya* tradition, is formally constructed according to religious prescriptions and turned towards Mecca. **Jensen (Tim)**, ed., *Religionsguiden - en vejviser til flygtninges og indvandreres religioner i Danmark* (The Religious Directory – A Guide Focusing on Religions Practiced by Refugees and Immigrants in Denmark), Copenhagen : Dansk Flygtningehjælp, 1999 (available at http://www.sdu.dk/Hum/TimJensen/Rel/index.html).

[47] **Al-Ali (Nadje)**, art.cit., p. 257.

[48] *Ibid.*, p. 256.

[49] *Ibid.*, p. 250.

[50] It is a widely shared perception in Denmark that the Danish Christmas has lost most of its originally religious content and is in most Danish families celebrated as the yearly tradition of family togetherness.

and thus position themselves as different and more "cultured" through the comments. This was the case with endogamous practices. Some parents found it important to make sure that (specifically) their daughters married a (preferably Bosnian) Muslim. I acquired this information from second-hand sources, such as Bosnian neighbours and/or acquaintances, or from the youth themselves. In one case, however, this was mentioned to me by a parent[51].

While in public and in interviews, a "secular religiosity" corresponding to a popular Danish perception of Bosnian Muslims as being « like us » was emphasised, in private, or rather, in the kind of private space into which I was allowed[52], some of the families would practice traditions indicating their Muslim religious and/or ethno-national affiliation, such as observing Ramadan or taking off shoes before entering a house. Among most of the families in my study, however, only the elderly people and sometimes women would pray regularly and fast consistently during the Ramadan. Most of the adults who had to go to work or were during the day would only observe the fast outside working hours and during weekends (if they observed it at all). Religious practices if indeed existing were thus kept private and moulded to the needs and exigencies of everyday life.

The differences as to how and by whom religious rituals and practices were undertaken were related to several factors, such as generation, gender, socio-cultural and geographical background, and specific combinations of these aspects. Furthermore, the present practice and discussions of Islam and religion in general in the Danish and Bosnian settings also contributed in shaping these practices. However, all the families would in one way or other celebrate *Bajram*, marking the end of the month of Ramadan and one of the main Muslim holidays. This was a period of intense socializing, mutual exchange of presents and hospitality and reaffirmation of social networks and emotional bonds.

The dichotomy between public and private identity practices which I believe I observed to some extent during my fieldwork was seemingly nothing new. According to Bringa, Islamic religious practices were tolerated, but not

[51] According to Tone Bringa, endogamy was common in the village where she did her fieldwork, and tied up with perceptions of religiosity. Women, not men, were seen as the guardians of Islam ; therefore, intermarriage in the village was relatively uncommon (see **Bringa (Tone)**, *op.cit.*, pp. 149-154). Whether this ideal of endogamy among some families in the Danish context was always religiously based or whether it was sometimes one of the consequences of the war remains unclear. The war certainly seemed to have restricted interethnic social relations and may thus have intensified the kind of endogamous practices cited by Bringa for Bosnian villages. Nevertheless, in in large cities intermarriage was a common practice.

[52] It could be debated whether this private was "private" at all during my presence and, if so, in what respect and to what extent. I will, however, have to discuss this in a different paper.

encouraged in Tito's Yugoslavia. Noel Malcolm reports that overt Muslim religious and cultural manifestations would in some cases be interpreted as hostile acts against the Yugoslav state and result in prison sentences[53]. In 1971, Bosnian Muslims were officially recognized as one of the six constituent nations of Yugoslavia. Articulation of the religious dimension of their national designation was not encouraged, however, by the Communist party. Downtoning religious expression was a means of ensuring the overall credo of Yugoslav "Brotherhood and Unity" (*Bratstvo i jedinstvo*)[54].

It could be argued then that the monoculturalist Danish discourse emphasizing sameness reinforced religious identity practices based on a strict distinction between public and private sphere already prevalent in socialist Yugoslavia. An important factor tied up to religious practices being private was furthermore the absence of a formal, let alone Bosnian mosque in the Danish region where I did my fieldwork. When asked about the presence of mosques, Dženeta (aged 28, employed in a local supermarket) said :

> No, there aren't any mosques down here. If there were, I am sure many of the older people would attend. Anyway, there is no one who could take on the role of *hodža* [imam]. I don't even know if there are any in Copenhagen. No Bosnian mosques anyway. I think there are Arab and Turkish mosques, but not Bosnian. I remember we visited a Turkish mosque in Copenhagen once. That was when we were [still living] in the [refugee] camps.

Unlike other countries such as Germany, which already had a large number of well-established Bosnian immigrants before the war (mainly of a rural background), and where Bosnian Muslims have extensive and organized religious networks, the pre-war Yugoslav immigrants in Denmark came mainly from Serbia and Montenegro, and were thus mainly Christian[55]. However, the absence of Bosnian mosques and the frequent debates in the Danish media about the appropriateness of allowing the construction of a central mosque (despite the fact that Islam is officially the second largest religion in Denmark

[53] One of the prominent people to have spent many years in prison on this account is Alija Izetbegović (1925-2003), the former President of Bosnia and Herzegovina. See **Malcolm (Noel)**, *Bosnia : A Short History*, London : Macmillan, 1994, pp. 195-196 ; **Bringa (Tone)**, *op.cit.*, p. 236, note 12.

[54] According to Tone Bringa, free expression of religion was allowed in Socialist Yugoslavia, but considered a strictly private matter. It was impossible to be a member of the Communist party and a practicing believer simultanously, whereas party membership was a prerequisite for making a career as a professional or climbing the hierarchy of state bureaucracy. See **Bringa (Tone)**, *op.cit.*, p. 204.

[55] On the differences between pre-war Croatian / Bosnian migrants and Croatian / Bosnian refugees, see **Povrzanovic-Frykman (Maja)**, « Construction of Identities in Diaspora and Exile : Croats in Sweden in the 1990s », in Povrzanovic Frykman (Maja), ed., *Beyond Integration : Challenges of Belonging in Diaspora and Exile*, Lund : Nordic Academic Press, 2001 ; **Povrzanovic-Frykman (Maja)**, « Establishing and Dissolving Cultural Boundaries : Croatian Culture in Diasporic Contexts », in Resic (Sanimir), Törnquist-Plewa (Barbara), eds., *The Balkans in Focus : Cultural Boundaries in Europe*, Lund : Nordic Academic Press, 2002.

after Lutheranism) also seem to support the argument that, in the Danish context, differences should be obliterated or kept private, to put it a bit polemically[56].

While the display of Muslim religious practices and ethno-national belonging was toned down among the Bosnian families in Denmark and in pre-war socialist Yugoslavia, the situation had changed markedly in some areas of post-war Bosnia. During research visits conducted in 2002, I witnessed several frustrating experiences of families on holidays in their old hometowns and their encounter with more overt requirements to display religious affiliation.

> Walking down the street in the small town where Aida (a 24-year-old student) was born and lived until the war, we passed by an elderly man. She greeted him with a « *Kako ste* ? » (« How are you ? ») and subsequently started telling me about her frustrations related to the changes in vocabulary which have taken place in the village : « We used to say *Dobar dan* (Good day), except when we met people who we knew were religious, now you cannot use it anymore. I went into a shop owned by Muslims the other day and said *Dobar dan*, and the shopkeeper looked rather sternly at me and said *Merhaba* and a couple of days later I was in a different shop, which is apparently now owned by Serbs and said *Merhaba* and of course they didn't like it. You feel so stupid and out of place. It was really frustrating and irritating »[57].

Aida reacted to the fact that linguistic, ethno-national markers had been "tightened" considerably during the war, leaving no neutral ground. She also reacted to the fact that the people and places with which she was once very familiar had changed. Different and unknown people now owned the shops, many shops had disappeared, and she did not know how to navigate in the new geographical and social space. In Denmark, a pre-war vocabulary was still most commonly used among the Bosnian Muslim families, except when talking to older people. Hence, identity practices among Bosnian Muslim families in Denmark often differed from those in Bosnia, but at the same these practice "fed into" each other. This interplay was observed especially by some of the young girls.

As Enisa (16-year-old primary school student) said during an interview in Denmark, in which we were talking about what she liked about Denmark :

[56] In a paper on "Euro-Muslims", the Danish / American professor of law, Jytte Klausen, made reference to the different degrees of liberty and rights to difference between the United States and Denmark, defining the Danish model as limited to peoples heads : « In Denmark, the Minister for Integration said the other day that people are allowed to think what they like. In the States, the right to difference is the right to not move your car from a parking space on the Sabbath » (**Klausen (Jytte)**, « Euro-Muslims : Religion and Civic Inequality in Denmark and Sweden », Paper presented at the Institute of Sociology, University of Copenhagen, 9 September 2003).

[57] Fieldnotes, August 2002.

> The good thing is the freedom... because people change when they go somewhere else... I mean, I have been visiting down there [in Bosnia] and I prefer being here, there is more freedom here to do things... Down there if you do something wrong, everyone knows and here they don't care as much... I mean, if I was down there I would probably have been home all the time, and maybe I would already have stopped attending school, because we stop school early down there.[58]

During their annual holiday in Bosnia, I stayed with the family for a week. At the time, there were many conflicts between Enisa and her parents, because they felt she needed to adapt her conduct to local Bosnian norms, which she experienced as restrictive. During one argument, Enisa shouted at her parents that she was much better off in Denmark, and asked what was the point of being in Bosnia, when she was hardly « let out of the house ». In the past two weeks, she said, she had only been out three times[59]. In the Bosnian context, this family was eager to preserve the honourable conduct of their daughter, which would feed back into the family image, and display their ability to comply with certain gender norms previously operating in Bosnian village contexts, norms which had become more restrictive and nationally important as a consequence of the war[60]. In the Danish context, however, Enisa's parents defined moral conduct in a much less strict way[61].

[58] Interview, May 2002.

[59] Although I believe that the form of many of these discussions had to do with the fact that Enisa was an adolescent, displaying normal teenage "sulkiness" and resistance, the content of these discussions was related to the differences Enisa experienced between the Danish and Bosnian contexts respectively, and thus reflected some of the difficulties that some youngsters (as well as some adult women) experienced when on holiday in what was still generally defined as their "homeland". Ruba Salih describes how Morrocan migrant women encounter a similar situation when on their summer trips to Morocco. See **Salih (Ruba)**, *Gender in Transnationalism. Home, Longing and Belonging among Moroccan Migrant Women*, London : Routledge, 2003, p. 74 ; see also **Jansen (Stef)**, « Gendered Transformations of "Home" amongst Bosnian Refugees », paper presented at the conference *Displacement : Global Dynamics and Gendered Patterns, Centre for Women and Gender Research*, Bergen (Norway), 29 September – 1 October 2005, p. 11.

[60] **Djuric (Tatjana)**, « From National Economies to National Hysteria – Consequences for Women », in Lutz (Helma), Phoenix (Ann), Yuval-Davies (Nira), eds., *Crossfires. Nationalism, Racism and Gender in Europe*, London : Pluto Press, 1995.

[61] Another, more pragmatic reason for this reincorporation of Enisa into a more patriarchal normative universe, was that as her grandmother who normally took care of her younger sister, was travelling around Bosnia, and Enisa being the eldest child had to take care of her sister.

## CONCLUDING SUMMARY

The story told in this article is the story of some Bosnian families, mainly families directing their efforts towards "fitting into" Danish society[62]. These families from Bosnia and Herzegovina do not constitute a homogenous group with the same priorities and practices, but rather several groups of individuals and families, some of whom formed close-knit social networks, others who were in conflict or simply did not have a lot of contact.

This paper has attempted to demonstrate how a particular way of thinking sameness and differences has affected the parameters for establishing relatedness in a Danish context. This ideal, if we could call it that, affected the processes of identification taking place among Bosnian Muslim refugee families. Bosnians occupied a privileged position in the Danish "hierarchy of foreigners". They were defined as being « like us [the Danish majority] ». Yet we have seen how this seemingly advantageous position generated its own unique set of limitations and contradictions which particularly affected Bosnians precisely because of their defined "almost Danishness".

In some families, this situation led to the constant accentuation of a secular Bosnian identity, emphasizing sameness with the Danes and a downtoning of religious aspects. This group of Bosnians perceived themselves to be under the constant "gaze of the Danish other". This situation led Bosnians to physically avoid or rhetorically distance themselves from other refugees and immigrants, especially when they felt subject to "the Danish gaze". Finally, this situation caused strains in Bosnians' interaction with Danes, as as it was precisely in these contexts that differences were constantly on display. These tensions seem to have accelerated following the September 11$^{th}$ debates and the harsh debate on immigrants and refugees leading up to the November 2001 Danish parliamentary elections.

[62] An interesting topic for further research along the lines of this paper would be to investigate how the processes of identification described here have evolved among those Bosnian families who fled to and eventually settled in Muslim countries.